

REPORT

OF

The Committee on Religious and Moral Instruction



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

1960

The Committee on Religious and Moral Instruction appointed by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of Shri Sri Prakasaji, held two meetings on 17-18 November and 20-21 December 1959 at Raj Bhavan, Bombay. The Chairman's hospitality enabled the Committee to devote fairly long hours to the meetings, and while living together at Raj Bhavan the members had the opportunity to exchange ideas on important aspects of the problem outside the meeting hours. In this way we were able to finish the work expeditiously.

At its second meeting when the Report was finalised, the Committee benefited from the participation of Shri K. G. Saiyidain, Educational Adviser to the Government of India, to whom our thanks are due.

The members of the Committee wish to place on record their sense of gratitude to the Chairman who took the trouble of preparing a comprehensive draft which served as the basis of our discussions, and has been largely incorporated in the final Report. Without Shri Sri Prakasaji's labour of love and wise guidance the Committee could not possibly have completed its work within a very short period of time.

PREM KIRPAL,
Member-Secretary.

RAJ BHAVAN,
BOMBAY.
21st December, 1959.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS AND MORAL INSTRUCTION—DECEMBER, 1959

In their letter No. F.1-1/59-SE1, dated August 17, 1959, addressed to Shri Sri Prakasa, Governor of Bombay, the Ministry of Education of the Government of India communicated to him that a Committee to make a detailed study of the entire question of religious and moral instruction in educational institutions, had been appointed with himself as Chairman, and with Shri G. C. Chatterji, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Rajasthan, Shri A. A. A. Fyzee, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Jammu and Kashmir, and Shri P. N. Kirpal, Joint Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Education, as members, with the last-named to act also as Secretary of the Committee. In the same letter, the terms of reference of the Committee were laid down as follows:

- (i) To examine the desirability and feasibility of making specific provision for the teaching of moral and spiritual values in educational institutions.
- (ii) If it is found desirable and feasible to make such provision, (a) to define broadly the content of instruction at various stages of education, and (b) to consider its place in the normal curriculum.

2. We should like to offer our grateful thanks to the Government of India, and particularly the Ministry of Education, for the great honour that they have done us in entrusting to us the difficult and delicate task of tackling a problem that has baffled eminent thinkers and educationists as well as ordinary householders through the decades. Everybody has recognised its importance; but so far, evidently, no proper solution has been found. We have, therefore, approached our work in a spirit of humility, realising fully the responsibilities placed upon us. It would perhaps not be an exaggeration to say that the intricacy of the task overwhelms us, and we have a feeling of diffidence as we endeavour to fulfil the duties assigned to us.

3. As soon as the appointment of our Committee was announced, it naturally attracted wide attention and publicity in the press. The Chairman received a large number of communications expressing great interest and satisfaction that the Government should have set up such a Committee, and suggesting various methods by which a proper type of religious education could be given in educational institutions.

Various individuals and agencies also supplied the Chairman with considerable literature on the subject. On the other hand, some newspapers in their editorials and others in their communications, opposed the fundamental purpose of this Committee, and regarded its assignment as futile and even dangerous.

4. We should like to mention here the method that we have adopted for the work of this Committee. The Ministry of Education wanted this report as early as possible so that they could place it before the Central Advisory Board of Education at its meeting early in 1960. As the different members of the Committee live at long distances, one from the other, it was not possible for them conveniently to meet very often or hold long sessions. We, therefore, carried out our work by correspondence, meeting only from time to time as absolutely necessary. We did not issue any questionnaires or invite any persons to give evidence before us. We feared that this process would unnecessarily prolong our proceedings and delay the sending in of the report. We felt that our main duty was only to formulate broad principles; and if and when they are accepted, a detailed programme of instruction could be worked out. In the light of these considerations, we thought it would be best if, for the present, we discussed the matters only among ourselves, and embodied our opinions in a report. We are grateful to all persons who have been good enough to transmit their views voluntarily, and have also supplied us with literature on the subject.

5. In the past, whenever any proposal was mooted for the teaching of subjects other than secular in schools and colleges, the words used were "moral and religious education." The Ministry of Education in its letter mentioned above, while retaining these words so far as the designation of our Committee was concerned, has, in defining our terms of reference, used the words "moral and spiritual values" and avoided the term "religion". We think that these words are more appropriate for they are non-controversial, for one thing, and also because the word "religion" has, in the course of time, come to have certain unfortunate associations. Perhaps we might dwell for a moment on this before we proceed further.

6. "Religion" etymologically means something that helps to bind man to man (*religāre*, to bind). As different religions arose in different parts of the world, they tended to bind only those who followed the same faith. Thus the followers of one religion got divided from the followers of another, both for the sake of material gain, and also in an attempt to bring others to one's own religion which each religious community regarded as the only true one. Fierce wars have been

fought in its name, and even within the fold of the same religion, much cruelty has been practised by one sect upon others who interpreted the same religion in a different way. Because of these sad events, too well known to be repeated, many thinking men and women have felt that we should have nothing to do with religion in its doctrinal or ritualistic form. In any case, they thought that this aspect of religion should have no place in the syllabuses of educational institutions. We understand the views of those who think in this manner, and we feel unhappy that men and women who should have known better, have misused the name of religion for purposes of conflict and for the breeding of hate among human beings instead of spreading love and mutual co-operation.

7. Broadly speaking, every religion can be divided into four parts:

- (i) *Personality of the Founder*.—Much of religion deals with the greatness and the holiness of the founder of the faith. Various incidents of his life are reverently remembered and recorded, and much of the devotion of the followers of a faith circles round his words and deeds.
- (ii) *Genesis*.—In this a religion tells its followers as to how all the phenomena we sense around us—all that we see and touch, hear and smell and taste—came into existence. This part of religion in one word, deals with what is known as "Cosmology" and seeks to give an account of the Creator and the Universe created by Him.
- (iii) *Ritual*.—Every religion prescribes some outward forms which its followers adopt, and which they follow. These deal with the great events in life like birth, marriage and death, and the rites and ceremonies that are performed at various stages of the individual's life.
- (iv) *Ethical code*.—Every religion tells its followers what is right and what is wrong, what they should do and what they should not do. It is in the pursuance of the moral code mainly that the ideas of good and evil, virtue and vice (sin) arise and are recognised.

8. While perhaps this can be regarded as generally true of all religions, Hinduism—as it is ordinarily called and which is the religion of the majority of the people of this land—does not completely fit into the above pattern, and adds to the intricacies of the problem before us. Hinduism, in a way, is not a religion even though it is designated as such. The word

"Hindu" does not occur in the sacred books or even in the old secular literature of those who are regarded as its adherents. In fact, it would be difficult to translate the word "religion" into Sanskrit, the language of the old texts, unless we use the word "*sampradāya*" which should really mean only a creed or a sect. The word "*dharma*" which is very well known, and which is generally recognised as a synonym of "religion", may mean, and does mean, many things like duty, rites and ceremonies, customs, code of conduct and law (both moral and secular). The word "Hindu" evidently was given to all the peoples who lived on the left or the east and south of the great river *Sindhu* or the Indus, by those who lived on the other side and beyond. The Greeks first gave this name to the inhabitants of this country and later the Turks, the Persians and the Arabs confirmed its usage. Much later, the people living in India also started calling themselves as such. As is well known, the Indian Muslims are known as "Hindi Muslims" in Muslim countries and in some European languages, the word "Hindu" is used to describe all Indians, whatever their religion.

9. The old literature of the Hindus—both religious and secular—gives various names to their faith:—

Vaidik dharma (the law of the learned); *Arya dharma* (the law of the noble); *Māṇava dharma* (the law of human beings); *Sanātana dharma* (the eternal law); and *Varnāśrama dharma* (the organisation of social life into *varnās* or castes and of individual life into *āśramas* or stages. There are some *sampradāyas* or creeds and sects within the orbit of Hinduism which embody the four characteristics of a religion as mentioned in paragraph 7 above. But it will be seen from an analysis of facts pertaining to what is known as the Hindu religion that there is not necessarily a Founder of the faith nor are there uniform ideas about genesis, sacraments or even moral codes. There is, however, an underlying stress on the performance of Dharma or Duty by every individual.

10. Islam, which is followed by the next largest group in the country, conforms to the normal pattern described in paragraph 7 above, and its message is quite definite. The religion of Islam stresses the brotherhood and equality of man under the sovereignty of God. It is uncompromisingly monotheistic and lays down that man shall be rewarded for his good actions and punished for his sins. The prophet Muhammad claimed no divinity. He was only a human being, but the inspiration he received was divine. Thus he was a model for Muslims to follow in their own lives. The word "Islam" signifies submission to the will of God and is not derived from the name of its founder. The chief pillars of the faith are prayer, fasting,

zakat (poor-tax) and pilgrimage. Originally the name of a faith, Islam later came to signify a certain pattern of civilisation, which is now an integral part of our Indian culture. As there are 40 million Muslims in our country, Muslim values must, of course, be taken into account in imparting moral and spiritual instruction.

11. In addition to these two principal religions, India also has other faiths, *e.g.*, Christianity, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, all of which have a deep religious and spiritual background and which must be understood by us if we are truly to learn and appreciate the spirit of India and its spiritual strength.

12. The complexity of the problem before us is evident. All the same, we feel that some solution must be found, and a workable system of instruction in moral and spiritual values evolved for the good of the country and the emotional integration of its peoples. It would be pertinent to enquire why this problem has been raised today in this particular form. The problem had been before the British rulers of the land since the 30's of the 19th century when they turned their attention to the task of organising their system of education in the country, in the wake of the consolidation of their political power. As they had to deal with followers of many religions, and were anxious to establish peace and security for the purpose of maintaining their hold on the country, they did not want to interfere with the religious beliefs of their subjects. Their bias naturally was for Christianity which was their own religion, and which they regarded as the only true one. They left the work of propagating this faith to the Christian missionaries whose educational institutions they helped financially and in many other ways; but as rulers, they observed strict neutrality. The British rulers in India regarded—and even tried to use—these British missionaries as their allies in a common cause. Moreover, when they introduced the English language and literature in their educational system, they had no doubt that indirectly this would also influence the religious outlook and belief of the people. The words of Macaulay written in 1836 are worth repeating in this connection. Lord Macaulay writes: "No Hindu who has received an English education ever remains sincerely attached to his religion. It is my firm belief that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolator among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence. And this will be effected without any effort to proselytise; without the smallest interference in their religious liberty; merely by the natural operation of knowledge and reflection".

13. The problem whether or not to give religious education specifically as such, has been mooted over and over again.

Throughout the period of British rule, neutrality was strictly observed so far as Government was concerned. Christian institutions were positively encouraged but no obstruction was put in the way of educational institutions that various other communities wanted to establish for themselves. Thus came into existence the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College founded by Sir Syed Ahmed at Aligarh in 1885. There were large numbers of Dayanand Anglo-Vedic Schools and Colleges established at various places in the Punjab and Uttar Pradesh (the United Provinces) and still earlier North-Western Provinces and other places. Then followed the Central Hindu School and College established by Mrs. Annie Besant and her Hindu colleagues at Banaras (now Varanasi) in 1898. Many schools and colleges were also established by the followers of the Buddhist, Sikh, Jain, Parsi and other faiths, and various creeds and sects belonging to the Hindu fold. All these had religious teaching as part of their curriculum, and no one objected to it. They were not necessarily exclusive, and freely admitted students of faiths other than those they professedly followed themselves. In some it was compulsory for students of all faiths to join the religious classes while in others this was not so. Towards the close of the British era, the question of religious education was discussed by the Central Advisory Board of Education at various meetings from 1944 to 1946. The Board's final resolution was to the effect "that while they recognise the fundamental importance of spiritual and moral instruction in the building of character, the provision for such teaching, except in so far as it can be provided in the normal course of secular instruction, should be the responsibility of the home and the community to which the pupil belongs."

14. When Swaraj came and our Constituent Assembly drew up the Constitution of a Sovereign Democratic Republic for ourselves (1950), it expressed its own decision regarding religious education in Articles 28 and 30 which are as follows:—

- "28 (1) No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds.
- (2) Nothing in clause (1) shall apply to an educational institution which is administered by the State but has been established under any endowment or trust which requires that religious instruction shall be imparted in such institution.
- (3) No person attending any educational institution recognised by the State or receiving aid out of State funds shall be required to take part in any religious instruction that may be imparted in such institution or to attend any religious worship that may be conducted in such institution or in any premises attached thereto

unless such person, or if such person is a minor, his guardian, has given his consent thereto.

- 30(1) All minorities whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
- (2) The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language."

It is clear from the wording of these articles that while there would be no instruction in any religion in educational institutions wholly maintained out of State funds, the State would continue to administer and assist institutions where religious instruction was imparted under any endowment or trust. The articles also enjoin that no one will be compelled to attend classes on religious education in any institutions whatsoever. Minorities—whether based on religion or language—are given full rights to establish educational institutions of their own choice. The State is not precluded from giving grants to them. It is certainly not our desire to recommend any departure from the principles embodied in the Constitution.

15. The fact that our leaders in Government and outside have thought it fit to raise the question again shows that something has gone wrong with our educational institutions. They must have found that there is some lack in our scheme of education which is apparently responsible for the various unfortunate incidents of indiscipline, rioting, even murder, that have taken place in the student-world in various parts of the country. They may have felt that it is necessary to develop some inner discipline and strength of character among our youth so that liberty is not debased into licence, that mutual harmonious relations are established among men and women of all creeds, and that our educational institutions produce young men and young women of good and sound character—disciplined, responsible and trustworthy—fit citizens of a free country. It is also possible that many people may have felt that the secular nature of our State has been wrongly interpreted to mean complete freedom from moral restraints, leading to a sad loss of all sense of values. This Committee, we believe, is the outcome of the fear that schools, colleges and universities today are not yielding the results that were expected from them, and the presumption is that there is something wrong in the educational system itself, which is largely responsible for the present state of indiscipline, frustration and drift. This lacuna has therefore to be filled; and education in the higher values of life, may perhaps do the needful.

16. Certain factors in our educational edifice have particularly attracted our attention, and have influenced our conclusions. The one great fact of the present day is the widespread demand for educational facilities at all levels everywhere. A directive of our Constitution enjoins that elementary education should become universal as quickly as possible. Schools, colleges, and even universities are springing up in large numbers almost everywhere. Another aspect of our educational situation appears to be that the education that we are imparting is not purposeful. There is a feeling of frustration in the minds of the students even as they pursue their studies, for their future is not clear to them. The menace of unemployment among the educated is growing day by day, causing deep resentment in the individuals concerned, dislocating our social and economic life. We find a great deal of discontent and disturbance at Colleges and Universities. Discipline, as generally understood, appears to have vanished. Even persons in authority are found quarrelling among themselves in many places, thus vitiating the atmosphere in which education is being imparted to our youth. Students who should be devoting their time and attention to studies, often appear to be engaged in anti-social activities. Generally speaking all personal touch between the teachers and the taught has been lost with the result that there is little mutual affection or sympathy. The situation appears to be deteriorating fast and there is evidently an urgent need for developing a better sense of values and qualities of character among the youth.

17. Apart from this feeling of frustration among our youth and the general decline in educational standards, the situation is appreciably affected by the disruptive forces at work in our society outside the school. It would be incorrect to lay the blame for the present situation on the youth alone, for they are being influenced all the time by the standard of values and conduct of the adults at home, in business life, in politics and other spheres of activity. There has been in recent decades a general loosening of social relationships and increasing emphasis on careerism and on a more materialistic approach to life. Some of the older bonds which kept various groups and classes together have lost their hold. The sense of cohesion and national purpose which was created by the experience of a common struggle for freedom has largely ceased to operate, and individuals and groups are more concerned with sharing in the rewards of power and patronage than with facing the challenge of national reconstruction and enriching the national heritage. All this has reacted adversely on the minds and attitudes of youth and undermined their discipline and morale. Though we are primarily concerned with the problem of youth, we should like to point out that the improvement of the educational process is intimately bound up with the wider

problem of social reform and the toning up of the moral and spiritual fibre of the people at large.

18. In spite of these general conditions it is significant that there still function in the country various special types of educational institutions where the atmosphere is pleasant; where students are devoted to their studies; and where they are properly preparing themselves for life. Among these are certain public schools which have an exclusive character on account of the high cost of education imparted. Then there are also schools and colleges run under Christian auspices, with an atmosphere of Christian thought and tradition, which do not charge very high fees and admit students of all denominations. More recently the Ramakrishna Mission have also opened educational institutions of good quality which fall under the latter category.

19. The public schools are reserved for those who can afford large sums of money for the education of their children. These institutions are beyond the reach of even the middle classes. The number of students in such institutions is comparatively limited and the more favourable pupil-teacher ratio enables the teachers to keep in close personal touch with their pupils. It will be found that in these public schools, the majority of the students come from privileged homes—the old aristocratic families, the upper strata of Government services, the wealthy mercantile community and the managerial ranks of big industrial concerns. While so much stress is being laid on education through the regional languages, these institutions continue to teach through the English language which is still very important for the purpose of securing entrance into public services—whether civil or military. No wonder that all those who can afford it, prefer these institutions to others of the general sort. Children brought up in these special institutions learn discipline and good manners. They are properly equipped physically and mentally. With all the advantages that they possess, they are also, generally speaking, better educated than those who go to the ordinary schools and colleges. When they go in for higher education, they start with an initial advantage. They cannot help forming more or less a separate class by themselves. Many of them continue the habits inculcated in the earlier years, observe discipline, study hard, take active part in games and sports, give a good impression of themselves, and succeed in the world. No one will deny the high quality of education imparted in the public schools and the training for character which these institutions emphasize. These institutions cannot, however, satisfy the needs of ordinary boys and girls who do not come from the class of the privileged rich. On the other hand, schools and colleges run under Christian auspices educate students of all classes. Though

from the outside they may resemble other institutions, yet the atmosphere inside these institutions, is different. The self-sacrificing spirit of the teachers is very evident. The contacts between the teacher and the taught are close and friendly. One does not hear much of indiscipline or strikes, and what the public schools do to the select few, these institutions are able to do for a larger number. The personal lives of the teachers, invariably affect the students for their good. We would like to see the atmospheres of these institutions extended to all schools and colleges in the country.

20. Religion through the ages has influenced all departments of life. It has inspired man to express all that is best in him. Literature and philosophy, sculpture and music, architecture and painting, all bear deep impress of religious thought. While reading a book or looking at a picture, we would not be able to understand its full significance unless we knew something of the religion of the author or the painter. Great literature cannot be properly understood and appreciated without some knowledge of certain concepts and images derived from religious thought. A study of English poetry, for instance, brings us in close contact with the history and beliefs of Christianity as well as its traditions and legends. It is not possible to read Greek literature without knowing something of Greek mythology which was an important ingredient of their religion. Similarly Persian and Arabic philosophy, literature and architecture are deeply imbued with the religious spirit of Islam. Certainly no one can read and understand Sanskrit Dramas unless he is familiar with the gods and goddesses who dominate so much of Hindu thought and life. A great part of the culture of humanity and most of the traditional values which continue to influence human conduct have been shaped by Religion, which is even today one of the most powerful forces in our society. We should recognize this fact and plan accordingly. Simply because some people have fought in the name of religion, or debased it by committing other crimes against humanity, we cannot exclude it from our plans for social progress and betterment of life.

21. In order to avoid constitutional difficulties arising out of Article 28 of the Constitution, as mentioned in paragraph 3, the terms of reference laid down for us, speak of "moral and spiritual values in educational institutions", and not religious education as such. The conclusion to which the Central Advisory Board of Education came in 1946, as mentioned in paragraph 9 above, was that religious education should be the business of the home and the community of the student concerned. To leave this entirely to the home and the community is, in our opinion, unsatisfactory. In the home, the rituals and the outward forms of religion are usually emphasized; and the young folk in such an atmosphere, satura-

ted with such ceremonials, are bound to attach too much importance to this aspect of religion to the neglect of ethical teachings and spiritual values.

22. Owing to various social and political factors during the recent past, different religious communities came to live in isolation from each other without caring to know the fundamentals of religions other than their own. Very few had any knowledge of the significance of religious holidays and festivals of other communities. This unfortunate ignorance of other faiths often accompanied by a limited understanding of one's own religion, bred prejudices and contributed to disunity. It is no wonder that such a situation could be easily exploited by foreign rulers who were naturally interested in encouraging communalism and religious separatism. Instead of binding people together in the common pursuit of fundamental moral and spiritual values and in the tolerance and understanding of each other's beliefs and ceremonies, religions tended to keep communities apart, often in an atmosphere of suspicion and hostility engendered by political considerations. This has been a great weakness in the mental and spiritual make-up of our people. In the scientific world there are many questions on which the opinion of experts is sharply divided, but such divergence of opinion does not lead to any ill-will or rancour. Unfortunately the same spirit of objectivity and tolerance does not prevail in the sphere of religion. Diversity of religion is one of the most important features of our national life, and it would be of the greatest advantage if every educated Indian were to know and understand the guiding principles and spiritual values of religions other than his own. We therefore advocate an objective, comparative and sympathetic study of all the important religions of India. By knowing in broad outline the beliefs of our countrymen in all their variety, we shall add to the fund of our knowledge, and with this knowledge and understanding, ignorance which breeds prejudice and bigotry will give way to tolerance and sympathetic appreciation of the religious life of our fellow citizens.

23. There can certainly be no harm if we learn the ethical codes prescribed in various faiths. At the present moment we know our own codes, if at all, and think all other codes must be crude and imperfect. A vegetarian Hindu or Jain, for instance, would be inclined to regard all non-vegetarians as calous, cruel and even immoral. If, however, he knew that many vegetarians, who would spare a mosquito, might have no hesitation in ruining a man, while there may be many non-vegetarians who even when they eat animal flesh, are really generous and charitable to their fellowmen, and kind and gentle to animals, he may not then think that vegetarianism necessarily means kindness and non-vegetarianism implies

cruelty. We could give other examples also of differing moral codes particularly in the matter of sex relations. If we understand why and how others think differently from us, we would be more tolerant, and alive to the need of forming new codes of behaviour in conformity with current thought. If however, our knowledge is confined to the penal codes prescribed by Governmental authority, we would not go very far in the establishment of true human understanding and brotherhood. We must not forget that there are always great philosophies—both social and spiritual—underlying all religions, and it would be good if we knew and understood them. We think that the various religions should be made the subjects of study, and every facility given for the followers of different faiths in the country, to know each other better by knowing each other's inner thought and aspiration. It is indeed a shame that many of our so-called educated people do not know the legends and heroes of our own faiths and of others in the land. If at all we do know, we do so through English books dealing with such matters, which we might chance to read. In other countries even the worst critics of religion know their religious books well, and are quite familiar with their teachings, doctrines and stories. It is time that we too knew our religious literatures directly, and were taught to appreciate them sympathetically and reverently.

24. We have to lay special stress on the teaching of moral and spiritual values. Moral values particularly refer to the conduct of man towards man in the various situations in which human beings come together—in the home, in social and economic fields, and in the life of the outside world generally. It is essential that from the earliest childhood, moral values should be inculcated in us. We have to influence the home first. We fear that our homes are not what they ought to be. Habits, both of mind and body, formed in the early years at home, persist, and influence our life afterwards. Education of the parents should also be a very important factor in our educational scheme today. By lectures, leaflets and pamphlets, through the radio and the cinema, this can be done, and should be done. Good manners are a very important part of moral education. It is not unusual that when a people attain Freedom suddenly after long years of bondage, they are inclined to become self-willed, arrogant and inconsiderate. In such situations good manners are easily set aside and young people tend to express the first flush of freedom in license and rowdyism.

25. The importance of good manners cannot be overstressed. With the passing away of the old, aristocratic society of the nineteenth century, much of the graciousness and charm of social behaviour and human relationships has largely disappeared. To outsiders we often give the impression of being

impatient and ill-mannered. Both in private and public life, we observe that due to mutual suspicion and prejudice, and pre-conceived notions and false ideas, much avoidable friction is caused. Good manners will impose proper restraint on us and remove harshness in our words and rudeness in our behaviour. Good manners verily are like the oil that helps to keep the machine of human society running smoothly. We have been losing our manners rather rapidly and it is necessary that we should recover them. Good manners should be sedulously inculcated and teachers must give instruction in this to all students at all times, both by example and by precept. We must be constantly told that what hurts us, hurts others also; and we must behave towards others as we want others to behave towards us.

26. Then there is a great deal of talk of corruption and dishonesty in our official and our business life. It is the students of today who are to be in charge of the various departments of life tomorrow; and if they learn what real integrity is in their early years, they are not likely to go very far wrong later on. Every effort must, therefore, be made to teach students true moral values from the earliest stage of their educational life. We are not unaware of the various steps that are being taken at different educational levels—towards literacy drive, adult education, and education of the handicapped. If the content of education is also enriched with moral and spiritual values, the purpose of education will have been truly fulfilled.

27. Just as moral values affect the relations between man and man, so do spiritual values affect the individual in his relation with himself. The individual is not only a body; he is also a soul. He does not live by bread alone; he wants inner peace and happiness. If he loses all spiritual values, he loses the possibility of being at peace with himself. It is necessary to have some faith in things beyond the flesh, some identification with a purpose greater than oneself in order to achieve this mental equilibrium. Unfortunately not many pursue the good for its own sake. Just as so many of us forbear from doing wrong because of the punishment that we know would follow at the hands of governmental authority, so must we also refrain from doing what we know is wrong, even when there is no fear of any policeman or magistrate. This can only be possible if we have faith in higher powers and in the moral basis of social organization. A realisation of spiritual values will also prevent us from being selfish. Law, for instance, will not punish a man who passes by, and does not save a little child from being drowned in shallow water from which he could have easily saved it, for law does not lay on him the duty of doing so. If, however, we have any realisation of moral and spiritual values, we would not only save a drowning child when there is really no fear of personal danger, but would also

put ourselves in positive danger in order to save and help others.

28. No governmental law compels us to be charitable or generous or helpful to others. It is only the realisation of social obligations which find their sanction predominantly in moral and spiritual values that can lift us above our personal mundane concerns, and impel us to devote ourselves to the welfare of others. If we do not inculcate these virtues in early years, we would never be able to do so later on. Thus while we study at school and college, we must also imbibe many virtues that only an appreciation of moral and spiritual values can give. A nation that deprives itself of these, and only concentrates on material concerns—however important and valuable they may be—would be like a body without a soul. No one knows what life holds for him. There may be much trial and suffering in store. Faith in things beyond our immediate ken, will give solace and comfort; it will also strengthen us to bear our lot and to carry on our duties as courageously and cheerfully as possible. We have no manner of doubt that it is most desirable that provision should be made for the teaching of moral and spiritual values in educational institutions. We also think that it is quite feasible; and even if there are some difficulties, they must be surmounted so that this may be made practicable.

29. We cannot deny the fact that very much depends upon the atmosphere that only good teachers can create. Great care has to be taken in the recruitment of teachers and in their training. There is no doubt that different persons are born with different urges, traits and temperaments; and just as there are many who seek power of wealth, there are others who prefer the quiet life of a teacher, gathering and spreading knowledge. The important thing is to provide sufficient incentives to young people with the right bent of mind and temperament to enter the teaching profession. Apart from raising the remuneration of teachers which is too low to attract talented persons to the profession, it is necessary to improve the general status of the teacher in society and to restore to him something of that honour and respect which he commanded in old times. Our present-day society has still to learn the value of good education and the overriding importance of teachers in bringing about the desired change. It is our teachers who will help to create and maintain the proper atmosphere in their institutions. The teachers must, however, be carefully trained and attuned to the objective of inculcating moral and spiritual values through the understanding of and respect for all religions. Dr. Bhagavan Das's *The Essential Unity of all Religions* (1955) and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's commentary on the Quran, entitled *Tarjumanul-Quran*, indicate the kind of approach which we should like to see adopted in matters of mutual religious understanding.

30. Among spiritual values, we would also include patriotism. Generally speaking, most of us have a very inadequate conception of patriotism. Our loyalties are narrow. The whole country with all its regions and peoples is seldom envisaged as an organic entity which has to be cherished and served, and whose integrity has to be protected even at the cost of our lives. In the old days, at school and college, students were taught poems that helped them to learn and imbibe patriotic fervour. They were taught books which gave stories of brave deeds performed in the service of the country. These books were later withdrawn by our British masters presumably because they feared that such books strengthened the feeling of patriotism and tended to incite people against foreign rule. Such literature must be very carefully chosen and prescribed so that students in their formative period of life, learn the virtues of patriotic service, and admire and emulate those who have done great deeds for winning and maintaining the freedom of their country. Today when fissiparous tendencies are gaining strength and regionalism threatens to disintegrate the country into smaller units, it is all the more necessary to assert the virtue of true patriotism and to see that this is properly inculcated during the impressionable years of a student's life. Our patriotism should neither be egotistical and chauvinistic nor so limited and narrow as to exclude our duties to humanity. It should foster a burning love for the Motherland and an ardent desire for service to one's fellow beings. Anything that helps us to behave properly towards others, is of moral value. Anything that takes us out of our self, and inspires us to sacrifice for the good of others or for a great cause, is of spiritual value. Any system of education that does not teach us these, is not worth the name. While the need to promote a sense of patriotism is urgent, we should not overlook the importance of other loyalties. It is necessary that young people should learn during their impressionable years their duties to self, family, neighbours, other human beings and animals.

31. We have noted with satisfaction that in recent years our educationists have become more conscious of the value of physical education and extra-curricular activities. The State is now doing more for physical education, games and sports, and other recreational and cultural activities than in the past when these were grossly neglected. These activities have their own place in the general scheme of education and their proper organisation must be the constant concern of teachers. We are, however, of the opinion that there is ample scope for the teaching of moral values through such activities and not enough is being done in this respect at present. These activities need to be more effectively directed towards the development of character and discipline.

32. Turning specifically to the terms of reference, our broad conclusions may be stated as follows:—

(a) The teaching of moral and spiritual values in educational institutions is desirable, and specific provision for doing so is feasible within certain limitations.

(b) The content of such education in moral and spiritual value should include a comparative and sympathetic study of the lives and teachings of great religious leaders and at later stages, their ethical systems and philosophies. The inculcation of good-manners, social service and true patriotism should be continuously stressed at all stages.

(i) We regard it most important that in any educational scheme, the home should not be left out; and we suggest that through mass media such as leaflets, talks, radio and the cinema, and through voluntary organisations, the faults and drawbacks of our homes both in the matter of their physical orderliness and their psychological atmosphere, should be pointed out, and instruction given as to how these can be removed. If this is done in an inipersonal manner, it would not hurt anyone, but would draw the attention of the persons concerned to their own shortcomings, thus inducing and encouraging them to eradicate these.

(ii) It would be very desirable, as suggested by the University Education Commission, to start work every day in all educational institutions with a few minutes of silent meditation either in the classroom or in a common hall. There could be some sort of prayer also which need not be addressed to any deity or ask for any favour, but which may be in the nature of an exhortation for self-discipline and devotion to some ideal. Occasionally in these Assembly Meetings inspiring passages from great literature, religious as well as secular, and pertaining to all important religions and cultures of the world, could be read with profit. Community singing of inspiring songs and hymns can be most effective at the school stage.

(iii) Suitable books should be prepared for all stages—from primary to university—which should describe briefly in a comparative and sympathetic manner the basic ideas of all religions as well as the essence of the lives and teachings of the great religious leaders, saints, mystics and philosophers. These books should be suitable to the various age groups in different classes of schools and colleges, and should be a common subject of study for all. Collections of poems and selected passages from Sanskrit, Persian, English and the regional languages should be made for the use of

young people. These publications will give sound instruction and perhaps teach true wisdom; they will also tell young people what duties they owe to themselves and to others. Suitable books should be prepared for different stages of education which would help in the inculcation of patriotism, and social service. These should particularly concentrate on deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice in the cause of the country and in the service of others. We attach very great importance to the preparation and production of such books. Authors should be selected with the greatest care and their manuscripts should be revised in consultation with eminent authorities. The entire programme of preparing and distributing such publications should be operated by a central agency set up under the auspices of the Union Ministry of Education.

- (iv) In the course of extra-curricular activities, learned and experienced persons may be invited to deliver lectures on inter-religious understanding. Educational broadcasts and group discussions may be organised to stimulate interest in the study of moral and spiritual values.
- (v) Special stress should be laid on teaching good manners and promoting the virtues of reverence and courtesy which are badly needed in our society. Traditional ways of learning proper conduct from such teachers as the Muslim Maulvis in the north may be encouraged. An all-out effort, in the nature of a crusade by all concerned is called for and nothing should be spared for the successful propagation of good manners and courtesy.
- (vi) Some form of physical training should be compulsory at every stage. This can be graded from Cubs and Boy Scouts to Auxiliary and National Cadet Corps. Games and sports should be encouraged and the dignity of manual work and social service to the community should be taught. At present, very few students take to these activities. Our suggestion is that everyone should take up some activity of this kind and thus learn habits of co-operating with others, and imbibe the spirit of sportsmanship.

33. It has been stated above that the teaching of moral and spiritual values in educational institutions is desirable and that specific provision for such instruction is feasible within certain limitations. The limitations are obvious. The letter and spirit of the Constitution must be respected and the sensibilities of religious groups cannot be ignored. The curriculum is already overloaded and the right type of teachers

are not easily available. In a society where several religions are practised side by side and where religious passions can be aroused easily, the State must proceed with caution in defining the content of instruction in moral and spiritual values. Such teaching should enlighten the student, promote mutual understanding and respect among persons of different faiths, and contribute to national unity. The main thing is that some great ideal of life should be placed before our young people and this should sink into them and become a part and parcel of their being as they complete the educational process. How is this teaching to be organised is the problem before us.

34. The following suggestions merely indicate a broad frame-work of instruction in moral and spiritual values at different stages of education:

(1) *Elementary Stage:*

(a) The School Assembly should be held for a few minutes in the morning for group singing.

(b) Simple and interesting stories about the lives and teachings of prophets, saints and religious leaders should be included in the syllabus for language teaching.

(c) Wherever possible the interest of the child may also be aroused by the use of audio-visual material, especially good quality photographs, filmstrips and coloured reprints showing great works of art and architecture closely connected with the main living religions of the world; such material could be used in the teaching of Geography."

(d) In the school programme, two periods a week should be set aside for moral instruction. In these classes the teacher should relate interesting stories drawn from the great religions of the world and explain broadly their ethical teachings. Dogmas and rituals of religion should be excluded from moral instruction.

(e) Through school programme, the attitude of "service" and the realisation that "work is worship" should be developed in the child.

(f) All schemes of physical education and all forms of play in the school should contribute to the building of character and the inculcation of the spirit of true sportsmanship.

(2) *Secondary Stage:*

(a) The Morning Assembly should observe two minutes' silence followed by readings from the Scriptures or great literature of the world or an appropriate address. Community singing should also be encouraged.

(b) The essential teachings of the great world religions should be studied as part of the curriculum pertaining to social studies and history. Simple texts and stories concerning different religions may be included in the teaching of languages and general reading.

(c) One hour a week should be assigned to moral instruction. The teacher should encourage the habit of discussion in this class. Apart from this regular class instruction, suitable speakers may be invited to address the students on moral and spiritual values. Joint celebrations may be organised on the occasion of important festivals of all religions. Knowledge and appreciation of religions other than one's own and respect for their founders, should be encouraged in various ways including essay competitions and declamations.

(d) Organised social service during holidays and outside class hours should be an essential part of extra-curricular activities. Such service should teach the dignity of manual labour, love of humanity, patriotism and self-discipline. Participation in games and sports should be compulsory and physical education, including sex hygiene, should be a normal part of school programme.

(e) Qualities of character and behaviour of students should form an essential part of the over-all assessment of a student's performance at school.

(3) *University Stage:*

(a) Students should be encouraged to meet in groups for silent meditation in the morning. These meetings should be supervised by the senior staff on a voluntary basis.

(b) A general study of different religions should be an essential part of the General education course in degree classes. In this connection, the following recommendations of the University Education Commission (Radhakrishnan Commission) are commended:

- (i) that in the first year of the degree course, lives of the great religious and spiritual leaders like Gautama the Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Socrates, Jesus, Samkara, Ramanuja, Madhava, Mohammad, Kabir, Nanak, and Gandhi be taught.
- (ii) that in the second year, some selections of a universalist character from the scriptures of the world be studied.
- (iii) that in the third year, the central problems of philosophy of religion be considered. Standard works for such studies should be prepared carefully by specialists who have deep knowledge of and sympathy for the religious systems about which they write.

(c) A post-graduate course in Comparative Religion may be instituted. Due importance should be given to the study of the following subjects in the appropriate Honours and M.A. courses in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences.

(i) Comparative Religion.

(ii) History of Religions.

(d) A fairly long period of social service should be introduced by all Universities. In the organisation and conduct of such service, considerable attention should be given to the learning and practice of moral and spiritual values.

35. From the broad suggestions outlined above, it is evident that we are in favour of a comparative and sympathetic study of religions and the teaching of their underlying philosophies and ethical codes. The Constitution provides that religious instruction given in institutions under any endowment or trust, should not be interfered with even when such institutions are helped by the State. We suggest that the sort of instruction that we have recommended, should be imparted in all institutions; and if any special religion is particularly taught in some institutions, this should be in addition to what we have proposed. There is no question of conscience involved in this; the instruction proposed by us is essential for the building of character and the making of proper citizens, and by its very nature it cannot possibly injure the susceptibilities of any religious group. We confidently hope that the effective implementation of the suggestions made above will create a proper atmosphere in our educational institutions, so that they may train not only technicians or professional experts but also humane and balanced citizens who can contribute to the happiness and well-being of their countrymen and of humanity as a whole.

36. As we close, we are bound to say that the many ills that our world of education and our society as a whole is suffering today, resulting in widespread disturbance and dislocation of life, are mainly due to the gradual disappearance of the hold of the basic principles of religion on the hearts of the people. The old bonds that kept men together, are fast loosening, and the various new ideologies that are coming to us, and which we are outwardly accepting without inwardly digesting their meanings, are increasingly worsening the situation. The only cure, it seems to us, is in the deliberate inculcation of moral and spiritual values from the earliest years of our lives. If we lose these, we shall be a nation without a soul; and our attempts to imitate the outer forms of other lands, without understanding their inner meaning, or psychologically attuning ourselves to them, would only result in chaos and confusion, the first signs of which are

already very distinctly visible on the horizon. Our nation of tomorrow is going to be what the young people at school, college and university today will make it. The edifice of our future entirely depends, for its beauty, dignity, utility, and stability, on the foundations we lay today, in the form of the education and training that our youth receive. The New India that is in the making, needs the services of us all—old and young, high and humble alike. If we neglect giving our boys and girls, our young men and young women, proper education and training, the future is dark and dismal indeed. We would regard our labours amply rewarded if by this report, we can help, in however small a measure, in the right orientation of our scheme of education so that our educational institutions—from the primary village school to the largest metropolitan university—may send forth year after year, and generation after generation, men and women fully trained and equipped to take their proper places in the different departments of national activity, and by their conduct, character and capacity, enhance the happiness and prosperity of our people, and keep the Unity, Integrity and Freedom of the country, inviolate for all time to come.

(Sd.) Sri Prakasa
Chairman.

(Sd.) G. C. Chatterji
Member.

(Sd.) A. A. A. Fyzee
Member.

(Sd.) Prem Kirpal
Member-Secretary.

Raj Bhavan,
Bombay,
December 21, 1959.



सत्यमेव जयते